

## Contributions

### IS IT A SUCCESS?

W. M. LYON

In *Gospel Messenger*, page 279, Elder Hollinger has an article entitled "*The Dress Question*," in which he positively asserts that plain hats are not to be found in the Washington church. This statement, I must confess, is rather surprising, and I regard it as my personal duty to kindly make a correction. Elder H's. query has often been put to me, and I have answered it quite to the reverse. There are plain hats in Elder Hollinger's congregation, (and stylish ones, too) and have been from the beginning; and since the organization of the Brethren Church in this city, the "measuring rod" has been carefully laid aside. I am a great admirer of consistency, candor and frankness, and it is as natural for me to oppose and expose error and inconsistency in every form, as it is for water to run down hill. In making this correction, God forbid that I should have any other motive or object than to exalt the truth.

Yes, there are hats worn by sisters who are members of the German Baptist church of this city, and most praiseworthy sisters too. Elder H. has now been in charge here going on three years, and these same sisters are still held as members, too, and just why he should publish an article for tens of thousands of his own people to read and therein declare that the hat finds no place in his church, I will leave for others to answer. Surely he is not afflicted with such a poor memory that he would have forgotten to tell his querist such an important, historical fact. It is true, I believe, that he withholds communion privileges from them, but aside from that extra expense and inconvenience, that is penance in a very mild form, for it takes but a little while to reach several congregations where these same sisters may commune with those of *like precious faith*—where the bonnet is almost, if not altogether, an unknown quantity.

I greatly fear that there is not much real conviction on the part of many who still profess to believe in the *essentiality* of the *bonnet*. If it is really an essential matter why tolerate the hat members for years and years? Why tell those sisters, "We will still hold you as members so long as you work with us and do not affiliate with the progressives?" O, consistency! Elder H. should have told his querist his true position on this wonderful hat and bonnet question. Why should he exhort and say, "City workers, be firm?" On a certain occasion I asked him why he tolerated the hat. The reply was, "We must give them *time*." How many years should it re-

quire to enforce a rule which is claimed to be supported by divine authority? But it was not my purpose to discuss this matter. I simply regarded it as my personal duty to correct the false impression that must necessarily be made upon those who read the article referred to, and who do not know the facts on both sides of this question.

I am sorry I do not have the privilege of replying thro the G. M. While I was in charge of the mission Elder H. now represents, I candidly acknowledged my utter inability to build up a church here in the "order." Brother H. will finally be compelled to make the same good confession—good because it is true. Does it look like a success to work two years and only get two sisters to accept the bonnet? That was my record. Brother H. has now worked more than two years and has made but two converts, and one of these a lady who had been trained from childhood to believe in the absolute necessity of the bonnet. How many years will it require to build up a church according to this rate? Surely immigration is the only hope.

But I hasten to a close. There is much I would like to notice in Brother H's. communication, did time permit. All the statements I have made can be easily verified should doubts be entertained by any. I think we should always seek to correct error wherever found, so it is always done in the proper way and with a kind spirit. And such I trust I have.

### MAKING LAWS

D. C. MOOMAW

Some time ago a querist asked the writers of the *Gospel Messenger* if the church had power to make laws. Editor Moore replied that it did *not* have authority to make laws but to interpret those our Lord made.

In a recent issue of the B. E. I asked him several questions relating to what is known in Tunker circles as "The Order" in its relations to the conditions of salvation. It is known that the candidates for baptism in that organization must promise to conform to that "Order" as a prerequisite to baptism and also, that no member is eligible to any office in the church who does not observe the same.

This "Order" consists of a lot of rules designed to perpetuate certain ancient styles of dress.

I asked the writer to tell us what laws our Lord made which, by interpretation, authorized that "Order."

He has not answered and I am induced to believe it is not his intention to answer them.

I will ask him a few additional questions presently but, before I do it, I want to tell him he is mistaken when he says his church "does not make any laws."

There is not an elder (of the old school)

who does not claim that the church has the power to make *rules* and rules and laws are the same in intent and effect. They are designed to regulate conduct, and if he will examine the book of "interpretations" (minutes) he will find such expressions as this: "It shall be the *rule* in all the churches."

Thousands upon thousands of men and women, as loyal to God's word as ever lived and suffered, have been expelled, literally driven, from their Father's house because they could not conform to those *rules*. Let the doubter write to Abram Cassel for confirmation of this statement. Not one of them as charged with violating a command of God

Brother Moore may think he is under no obligation to answer my questions but I tell him he is mistaken again. Our Lord will hold him responsible for his answers to questions and his refusal to answer.

If he is right in his statement that the rules of his church known as the "Order" are, every one of them, "interpretations" of God's Word, honest and simple, then every Progressive outside his church is a scismatic and every one inside is a rebel against God and will suffer divine displeasure therefore.

The only material difference between us and the church of editor Moore is the question of the origin of the traditions of which the "Order" consists, and of the dominance of the A. M. over the incidental customs and consciences of its subjects.

They maintain that they are of divine origin and we claim that they are not.

The questions I asked the editor were intended to settle this matter. If he can show conclusively that he is right, by the Word, and that the church has always been right in her "interpretations" as he calls them, that is, that a promise to conform to certain antique styles of dress is a prerequisite to baptism, as clearly taught in the Word as faith and repentance, and that, without such a specific pledge, no man is fitted for official work or for salvation, then we will come and knock at the door of his church for admittance.

If he cannot do this then he is adding to God's Word and, in the last judgment he will pay the full penalty for such work. If he is teaching more than the Lord specifically commanded he has violated the great commission.

Now, Brother Moore, answer the questions I asked in the light of the teachings of Christ, as you must give account at the last day. There are 50,000 men and women in and out of your organization whose salvation, you being the judge, hangs on your answer.

You are teaching for God and eternity and not for a religious organization, if the spirit of the Lord leads you. Religious parties appear on the world's stage,